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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 181322

FOLLOWING REPEATS NEW DELHI 10482 ACTION SECSTATE INFO
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QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 10482

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, SOPN, IN
SUBJ: NON-ALIGNED PRESS POOL: POLITICAL ATMOSPHERICS

REF: NEW DELHI 10373

1. BY ALL ACCOUNTS INDIANS COMPLETELY DOMINATED THE CONFERENCE, AND INEVITABLY THERE WERE MURMURS OF "RAILROADING" FROM SOME DELEGATIONS (E.G., NEPAL). SEVERAL COUNTRIES APPARENTLY OBJECTED TO THE INDIANS HAVING INSISTED ON NAMING THE MEMBERSHIP OF COORDINATING AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEES TO FOLLOW UP THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE RATHER THAN WAITING FOR THE NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE IN COLOMBO TO RATIFY THE WORK OF THE PRESS MEETING BEFORE DESIGNATING THE MEMBERSHIP OF THESE COMMITTEES. THE MAURITIAN WHO WAS IN THE CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE WHICH NAMED THE MEMBERSHIPS WAS REPORTEDLY FELT TO HAVE BEEN IN THE INDIAN POCKET.

2. THE MAIN PROTAGONISTS WERE SEEN BY MOST CONFERENCE OBSERVERS AS HAVING BEEN INDIA AND YUGOSLAVIA, WITH THE
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SOVIETS PLAYING AN ACTIVE ROLE BEHIND THE SCENES AGAINST

YUGOSLAVIA. THE INDIANS DECLINED BY INACTION (AND TO THE GREAT ANNOYANCE OF THE YUGOSLAVS) TO DISTRIBUTE AS A CONFERENCE DOCUMENT A LENGTHY YUGOSLAV JUSTIFICATION FOR BELGRADE (AND TANJUG) AS THE FUTURE CENTER FOR NEWS POOL ACTIVITY AND EXPLANATION OF HOW IT WAS ALREADY EFFECTIVELY ACTING AS A NEWS POOL CENTER. THE INDIANS REPORTEDLY PUT OUT FEELERS ABOUT THE ACCEPTABILITY OF DELHI AS THE POOL CENTER, AND FINDING FEW TAKERS, THEN OPTED FOR A "NO-CENTER" SOLUTION. AN MEA OFFICIAL WHO ATTENDED THE CONFERENCE BLANDLY TOLD US THAT INDIA HAD CONSISTENTLY BEEN OPPOSED TO INSTITUTIONALIZED CENTERS FOR THE NAM (SUCH AS A SECRETARIAT) AND TOOK THE SAME VIEW OF A CENTER OR EVEN CENTERS FOR THE PRESS POOL. OF COURSE, THERE WERE "SOME COUNTRIES LIKE YUGOSLAVIA" THAT FELT SOMEWHAT DIFFERENTLY. THIS SAME SOURCE NOTED THAT NOT ONLY HAD THE INDIANS ATTEMPTED TO AVOID HAVING "ZIONISM" INCLUDED IN THE CONFERENCE DECLARATION (NEW DELHI 10272) BUT WHEN THIS BECAME IMPOSSIBLE AS A RESULT OF A SYRIAN AMENDMENT FROM THE FLOOR, THE INDIANS HAD ATTEMPTED TO EASE THE PROBLEM BY SEPARATING "ZIONISM" FROM "RACISM" IN THE LIST OF ACTIVITIES TO BE OPPOSED AS THEY WERE FINALLY PRINTED. THE SOVIETS, WORKING, WE ARE TOLD, THROUGH THE ANGOLANS AND CUBANS, ALSO ACTIVELY LOBBIED AGAINST ANY ACCEPTANCE OF BELGRADE AS A POOL CENTER AND AGAINST THE YUGOSLAVS IN GENERAL FOR BEING ANTI-SOVIET. AT THE SAME TIME, THE SOVIETS APPARENTLY INDICATED SOME RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE POOL CONCEPT AS A WHOLE IF IT WERE TO MEAN REDUCED ACCESS FOR TASS AND OTHER SOVIET NEWS AGENCIES IN THE NON-ALIGNED WORLD. THE CPI-CONTROLLED DELHI "PATRIOT" JULY 15 EDITORIALY EXPRESSED UNUSUAL CONCERN THAT THE POOL WOULD RUN THE RISK OF "BECOMING A DISTRIBUTION CENTER OF OFFICIAL PROPAGANDA. IF THE CREDIBILITY OF NEWS FROM THE POOL IS TO REMAIN UNAFFECTED, WAYS TO ENSURE TRUE OBJECTIVITY WILL NEED TO BE FOUND." WE ASSUME THIS MEANS THAT THE CPI HERE IS CONCERNED THAT NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY RELEASES MAY NOT ALWAYS BE SYMPATHETIC TO DOMESTIC COMMUNIST MOVEMENTS. THE EDITORIAL ALSO IS UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE ATTACK BY THE CONFERENCE DECLARATION ON PRESS AGENCIES "LOCATED IN A FEW DEVELOPED COUNTRIES" AND ATTEMPTS FOR FOCUS ATTENTION ONLY ON "WESTERN" NEWS MEDIA IN CALLING FOR COOPERATION AMONG THE NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES

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THEMSELVES AND "WITH OTHER COUNTRIES" IN THE COLLECTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS. WHILE NUMEROUS SPEAKERS AT THE CONFERENCE FOCUSED THEIR CRITICISM ON THE WESTERN NEWS AGENCIES, THE DOCUMENTS EMERGING FROM THE CONFERENCE DO NOT SPECIFY THE WEST BUT ONLY "A FEW DEVELOPED COUNTRIES" AS MONOPOLIZING NEWS DISTRIBUTION.

4. ASIDE FROM THE YUGOSLAV/INDIAN TUSSLE (ABOUT WHICH

NEITHER INDIANS NOR YUGOSLAVS ARE THEMSELVES SAYING MUCH), THE TUNISIANS AND IRAQIS APPARENTLY WERE CONFERENCE RIVALS FOR MIDDLE EAST NEWS INFLUENCE. MOST OTHER COUNTRIES WERE RELATIVELY PASSIVE OBSERVERS AND PLAYED RELATIVELY LITTLE ROLE IN THE ACTIVITY. ONE WESTERN NEWSMAN WHO COVERED THE MEETING THOUGHT THAT THE INDIANS HAD ALSO BEEN WORKING TO UNDERCUT ALGERIAN INFLUENCE, BUT WE HAVE NOT HEARD THIS ELSEWHERE OR FOR THAT MATTER THAT THE ALGERIANS WERE ACTIVE AT ALL.

5. MOST INDIAN CORRESPONDENTS PRIVATELY CONSIDERED THE CONFERENCE AN EXERCISE IN INDIAN NON-ALIGNED GAMESMANSHIP AND OF NO PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE AT LEAST IN THE SHORT TERM, EXCEPT IN DEFLECTING ANY PRESENT CENTRALIZATION OF NON-ALIGNED NEWS DISTRIBUTION. SOME OF THESE BELIEVE, AND THIS IS SHARED BY THE UK HICOMM OFFICER COVERING THE MEETING, THAT THE INDIANS WANT TO PUT OFF ANY REAL MOVEMENT ON A PRESS POOL UNTIL THEY HAVE A SATELLITE IN THE SKY AND HAVE GREATLY AUGMENTED THEIR OWN TECHNOLOGICAL CAPABILITY TO COMINATE A PRESS POOL. WE NOTE THAT THE "PATRIOT" EDITORIAL NOTED ABOVE CONCLUDES WITH THE OBSERVATION THAT "FOR THE POOL TO SUCCEED, THE NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES, THROUGH A SYSTEM OF MUTUAL ASSISTANCE, WILL NEED TO DEVELOP WITHIN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME, THE TELECOMMUNICATION NETWORK AND TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT NECESSARY TO ENABLE IT TO COMPETE WITH THE MULTINATIONALS IN THE NEWS MEDIA." THE "INDIAN EXPRESS" THE SAME DAY COMMENTED THAT "THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT INDIA, BECAUSE OF ITS DEVELOPED NEWS SERVICES AND ITS TECHNOLOGICAL CAPABILITIES IN THE COMMUNICATION FIELD, WILL PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN HELPING OTHER COUNTRIES TO IMPROVE THEIR COMMUNICATION FACILITIES AND THEIR NEWS AGENCIES IF NEEDED."

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